

REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration of this application as presently amended and in light of the following discussion is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-20 are presently active in this case, Claims 1, 3, 4, and 6 having been amended by way of the present Amendment. Claims 21-36 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer.

Claims 4 and 6 were amended to correct a minor grammatical error. Namely, Claims 4 and 6 were amended to change "a opening position" to "an opening position."

In the outstanding Official Action, Claims 1, 3, and 4 are objected to for minor informalities. Claim 1 has been amended to remove the language objected to in the Official Action. Claims 3 and 4 have been amended to add the word "hermetic" before the word "door" as suggested in the Official Action. Accordingly, the Applicants request the withdrawal of the objection to the Claims 1, 3, and 4.

Claims 1-20 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. Claim 1 has been amended to provide proper antecedent basis to the "first hermetic door" recited therein. Accordingly, the Applicants respectfully request the withdrawal of the indefiniteness rejection.

Claims 1-20 and 36 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over the '549 Tejima et al. reference (JP 9-248549) in view of the Bassereau reference (U.S.

Patent No. 2,446,403). For the reasons discussed below, the Applicants request the withdrawal of the obviousness rejection.

The basic requirements for establishing a *prima facie* case of obviousness as set forth in MPEP 2143 include (1) there must be some suggestion or motivation, either in the references themselves or in the knowledge generally available to one of ordinary skill in the art, to modify the reference or to combine reference teachings, (2) there must be a reasonable expectation of success, and (3) the reference (or references when combined) must teach or suggest all of the claim limitations. The Applicants respectfully submit that a *prima facie* case of obviousness cannot be established in the present case because the references, either when taken singularly or in combination, fail to teach or suggest all of the claim limitations recited in independent Claim 1 of the present application.

Claim 1 of the present application recites a treatment apparatus comprising a first hermetic chamber having a first opening, and a tube capable of inserting into the first opening. The tube has a second opening on a side facing the first hermetic chamber and a third opening on the tube. The treatment apparatus further comprises a first hermetic door, placed outside the first hermetic chamber, capable of opening and closing the first opening. The first hermetic door is positioned between the second opening and the third opening such that the first hermetic door is shielded from the first hermetic chamber by the tube when insertion of the tube into the first opening is completed.

The Applicants respectfully submit that neither of the cited references singularly or in combination disclose a first hermetic door that is positioned between the second opening and

the third opening such that the first hermetic door is shielded from the first hermetic chamber by the tube when insertion of the tube into the first opening is completed, as recited in Claim 1 of the present application.

The Official Action cites the '549 Tejima et al. reference for the teaching of various features. However, the Official Action notes that the '549 Tejima et al. reference is silent as to an apparatus that comprises a tube capable of inserting into a first opening of a first hermetic chamber such that a door for the first opening is shielded from the first hermetic chamber by the tube, when the tube is inserted into the first opening, wherein the tube comprises a second opening on a side facing the first hermetic chamber and a third opening on an area opposite the second opening. The Official Action cites the Bassereau reference for such teachings.

The apparatus of the Bassereau reference includes a furnace (1), a condenser (4a), and a movable closure plate (9). The furnace (1) has an opening and the condenser (4a) has an opening facing the furnace (1). The condenser (4a) also has an opening (4c) for permitting the pressure within and outside the condenser (4a) to be balanced. Further, the condenser (4a) can be inserted into the opening of the furnace (1) and the closure plate (9) can be moved from position (9a) to position (9b) for sealing the chamber (7).

Although the apparatus of the Bassereau reference has the above-mentioned structure, the closure plate (9) is not positioned between the opening facing the furnace (1) and the opening (4c) when the condenser (4a) is fully inserted into the opening of the furnace (1). As a result, vaporized gas discharged from the opening (4c) flows through the hood (5) and the

chamber (7) and evacuated from the outlet (7a) so that vaporized metal is deposited on the bottom surface of the closure plate (9).

The Official Action indicates that closure plate (9) inherently is positioned between the two openings of the tube when the tube traverses connecting means (8) during inserting operating. However, the Applicants respectfully submit that the Bassereau reference does not disclose a first hermetic door that is positioned between the second opening and the third opening such that the first hermetic door is shielded from the first hermetic chamber by the tube *when insertion of the tube into the first opening is completed*, as expressly recited in amended Claim 1 of the present application. The present invention advantageously provides a configuration in which vaporized metal or harmful substances evacuated from the third opening are not deposited on the surfaces of the hermetic door. This structure reduces deposition of the vaporized metal and pollution of harmful substance thereby maintenance of the apparatus can be easier.

Accordingly, the Applicants respectfully request the withdrawal of the obviousness rejection of Claim 1.

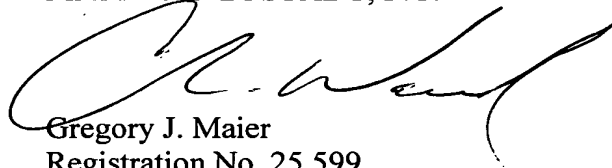
Claims 2-20 are considered allowable for the reasons advanced for Claim 1 from which they depend. These claims are further considered allowable as they recite other features of the invention that are neither disclosed nor suggested by the applied references when those features are considered within the context of Claim 1.

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Consequently, in view of the above discussion, it is respectfully submitted that the present application is in condition for formal allowance and an early and favorable reconsideration of this application is therefore requested.

Respectfully Submitted,

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